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COLORADO COLLEGE PUBLICATION

GENERAL SERIES NO. 175

AMERICAN HIGHER EDUCATION THE PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM IN THE UNITED STATES (TWO ADDRESSES)

by

CHARLIE BROWN HERSHEY
Dean of Colorado College



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These two addresses were prepared especially for and were given in several universities and university colleges in Great Britain in October and November, 1930.

COLORADO SPRINGS, COLO.
MARCH, 1931

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INTRODUCTION

Through the Institute of International Education of New York and its agency in London, the British Division of the American University Union, arrangements were made for me to visit several of the British universities and to confer with men engaged in the training of teachers in the universities. Also, conferences were arranged with men engaged in the administration of different types of schools in and near the university cities. The itinerary included visits to the University College of North Wales at Bangor, the University of Edinburgh, Armstrong College of Durham University at Newcastle upon Tyne, the University of Sheffield, Cambridge University, Kings College of the University of London, the University College of Southampton, the University of Bristol, the University of the Southwest at Exeter, and Oxford University. In all of these educational centers I conferred with school men on the subject of British education and tried to answer many questions about American education. In several of the universities I spoke formally to students and faculty members on the subject of education in the United States.

It was not easy to decide what aspects of American education should be presented in the universities where arrangements had been made, as a reciprocity measure, for me to speak on the subject. There seemed to emerge from the complete program of education in the United States two rather distinct suggestions. The elaboration of some one phase of our educational service or the detailed description of some special type of school seemed to be one possibility, while a more general statement describing some large part of our complete scheme of education offered another possibility. The one would permit the presentation of a clear picture of a small part of our educational service but would not give a

complete picture. The other would permit a general description of American education in broad outline but without much detail. The circumstances under which the addresses were to be given suggested that the latter would be better. Accordingly, I decided to prepare addresses on two subjects: The Public School System in the United States, and American Higher Education. These two addresses are presented in this issue of the Colorado College Publications as they were given in several British universities in October and November, 1930.

The selection of material to be included in a discussion of such general subjects was somewhat arbitrary. The time for each address was limited to about forty-five minutes, hence the problem of what not to say was somewhat more difficult to solve than the problem of selecting the phases of the subject that seemed most important to represent adequately the types of education under discussion. It is perhaps unnecessary to say that my own personal interest in the organization and administration of education entered largely into the selection of the items for presentation and discussion. Also, an effort was made to answer some of the questions usually asked by students of educational theory and practice. The questions I attempted to answer in the addresses are the same questions I had been asking in other European countries, particularly in Germany, and was asking the British school men in my visits among them.

In view of the fact that each of the forty-eight states in the United States has its own educational laws, and because of the diverse practices in American higher education, it seemed necessary to use rather frequently such words and phrases as, "usually", "in most instances", "as a rule", "occasionally", etc. Many of the statements were intended to give general but, it is hoped, correct impressions and nothing more. A statement about any one state or institution could, of course, have been more exact and detailed.

A word about the courtesy of the British school men seems not to be out of order in this introductory statement. My expectations in the matter of assistance were far more than realized in all the contacts I had with men in education

in the universities, as well as in the elementary and secondary schools. School officials gave me access to the schools under their authority in the cities, and supplied me with pamphlets and documents concerning their educational systems. Headmasters and the masters in the classrooms welcomed me to their schools and classes and took considerable time to answer questions and to tell me of their school work. I desire to express my sincere appreciation of the courtesies extended to me by the British school men.

AMERICAN HIGHER EDUCATION

To speak of American higher education in Great Britain is to tell the mother of her child. The men who founded our first college in 1636 were Englishmen in an infant English colony. The college they founded, now called Harvard University, has given character and direction to our whole development of higher education. To be sure, the offspring has wandered somewhat from the traditions of the mother country and her universities, but that seemed almost necessary because of the nature of the land in which the child was born.

The term, higher education, as it is used in the United States, seems to belong peculiarly to that one country. It can best be defined by reference to the organization of our system below what we call higher education. We have in the United States, roughly speaking, three sections in our educational ladder. At the bottom is the elementary school which is concerned chiefly with the foundation materials. It is the period in which the child learns to use with ease and facility the tools or symbols required in his further progress in the school and in life. This period ends at about the age of twelve. The next period is the secondary level extending from about twelve to eighteen years. During this adolescent period the emphasis is on the personal development of the individual with special reference to his social responsibilities and privileges, and on an introduction to the several fields of knowledge and human achievement. Also, during this period there is an opportunity for those who will not go beyond the secondary school level, or what we call in the United States, the high school, to secure elementary vocational instruction. Beyond the high school, almost every kind of education, especially in regularly organized educational institutions, is called higher education. This includes the institutions we call in America the colleges and universities. On the instructional side it includes general cultural subjects like literature, history, science, art, and philosophy as well as the highly specialized subjects of medicine, engineering, and others of a like nature.

There have been three periods in the development of our

institutions of higher education with respect to the authority back of the institutions. During the first fifty years of our national life, or until about 1825, the several states, in the new republic, were somewhat aggressive in the establishment of colleges and universities as well as in other fields of political and social endeavor. Several of the states created new institutions of higher education while some of the others attempted to secure control of institutions established on a semi-independent basis during our colonial period. However, these new states were hardly able, financially, to support the institutions they created, or attempted to adopt. Accordingly, they became, in some instances, what might be considered independent educational foundations and in others, poorly supported and indifferently administered state institutions. While the several states were making their gestures in the direction of higher education, interested individuals, groups of individuals, or local communities, sometimes under some religious impulse, but, more generally, simply through a desire to have a seminary of learning for their boys in their own neighborhood, secured permission from their respective state governments to create and maintain a college or university. The control of these institutions was usually vested in a board of trustees provided for in the charter. Aside from the efforts on the part of the states to create and maintain colleges under their patronage, the actual work of college building during this early period, 1776-1825, was done by men who established institutions largely on an independent or non-sectarian, and non-political basis.

During the middle fifty years of the nineteenth century, 1825-1875, the several religious denominations were very aggressive in their missionary and other activities in our westward expansion as a people. Among other agencies employed by the denominations to advance the religious life of the frontiers was the denominational college. The story of this denominational interest in higher education is too long to relate here, but it should be said that almost every college or other institution of higher education during the period indicated had some connection, usually formal and legal, with a religious denomination. The college president and a considerable number of the instructors were clergymen. The charters creat-

ing the colleges usually provided that some denominational conference, or association, or a group of such bodies, should nominate or elect the trustees of the institutions they had brought into existence. It is what might be called an era of denominational colleges in the United States.

The seventh and eighth decades of the last century mark the significant beginning of our state universities and technical schools. Through the encouragement given them by the federal government by large land grants, a number of states created state universities. It was during this period also, that the several states began to appropriate money to erect university buildings, to buy equipment, and to meet current expenses. Accordingly, during the past fifty years every state has created or developed a state university or other state supported institution of higher education. These are administered by the state through boards of control, either elected by the people or appointed by the governor of the state or the state legislature.

Today, in the United States we have the three kinds of control in our higher education,—the independent educational foundation, the denominational college, and the state institution. In general, the administrative organization of these different types of control is very similar. In every case there is a board of control usually called a board of regents or board of trustees which has general authority in the administration of the institution. The members of these boards are only rarely educators in a professional sense. These men, or women, receive their authority, in the case of the independent educational institutions from the charter under which the institution exists. The board is what we call self-perpetuating,—the members select their own successors. The constituency of such an institution is very nebulous, with its graduates forming the most tangible element. In the case of the denominational colleges, the board of control is selected or nominated, as indicated above, by some denominational conference, association, or by a group of such organizations. This board is responsible to the denomination under whose authority the college exists. The state institutions are under the immediate control of a board elected by the people of the state which supports the institution, or appointed by the governor or the leg-

islature of the state. In this case the board of control is responsible ultimately to the people of the state. The members of these boards of control serve without pay.

The internal administration of the colleges and universities in the United States is in the hands of an officer usually called the president. This officer is selected by the board of control and is responsible to the board for the conduct of the institution. The president is usually selected from a teaching or a subordinate administrative position. The president with his faculty are charged with the responsibility of organizing and administering the educational services of the institution. Very frequently, the president is expected to see that the finances of his college or university are kept in good condition and to secure additional funds for its development. He is usually expected to function in the double role of scholar and business man.

Under the president, and responsible to him, are other officers who assist him in the administration of the institution. These are: First, the treasurer or business manager who has general charge of the funds of the institution, including the investment of endowment funds in the endowed institutions. Second, an officer or officers in general charge of the student affairs and student activities. This officer, if only one, is frequently called the Dean of Student Affairs, if two, as is usually the case in our coeducational institutions, they are called the Dean of Men and the Dean of Women with duties corresponding to their respective titles. Third, if the college is highly unified in its educational services, as is frequently the case in our smaller colleges of liberal arts, there is a third officer called the Dean of the College. He, too, is responsible to the president with duties in the general field of instruction. His work is more directly with the teaching staff in the organization and conduct of their respective departments and courses. If the educational offerings are diversified, as is the case in our universities, with their colleges of engineering, medicine, law, etc., within the university, then there is a dean for each of these colleges or schools who is responsible to the president for the detailed organization and administration of his particular field of educational service. Thus, as I have endeavored to show, the constituency of one

of our institutions of higher education, whether it be the people of a state, the members of a denomination, or the more nebulous group interested in an independent institution, carries on the work of the institution through a board of trustees or regents which selects a president as its agent in the immediate problem of administering the institution. On the other hand, all of the internal administrative and teaching services of the institution center in this same officer, the president.

The teaching staff in an American college or university is called the faculty. The faculty is composed largely of men, but women are frequently employed to teach languages, literature, and, less frequently, some of the other subjects. There are usually four ranks in the faculty with the professor, sometimes called full professor, at the top, then the associate professor, next the assistant professor, and at the bottom, the instructor or assistant. The selection of members of the teaching staff, and their rank in the faculty, is in the hands of the president with the advice of the dean or deans, or departmental chairmen. The appointments must be approved by the board of control. Exceptions may be made in the case of instructors and assistants. The president depends very largely on his faculty for advice and suggestions in the organization and administration of the educational policies of the institution. He frequently gives almost wholly into the hands of a department, or a school or college within a university, the details of their educational policy.

Students are admitted to institutions of higher education in America from our high schools upon the presentation of a sufficient number of prescribed and elective units of secondary school work. A unit of secondary school work consists of a subject of study throughout a school year of approximately nine months. Most high school students carry four subjects each year and thus acquire four units in one year or sixteen units in the four years of secondary schooling immediately preceding their entrance to college. The college admission requirement is fifteen units of high school work with about one-half or two-thirds of them definitely prescribed. Thus, a college or university may require three units of English, two units of Mathematics, two units of some foreign language, one unit of history or social science, and one unit of a labora-

tory science. The remaining six units to complete the total requirement of fifteen may be additional units from the above subjects or other units of a vocational nature.

During these recent years when so many of our adolescent boys and girls are going to the public high school and are continuing its work for four years, the colleges and universities have felt the necessity of imposing some qualitative restriction, in addition to the simple quantitative element represented by fifteen units of high school work. A great many institutions now prescribe that only those high school graduates whose rank places them in the upper half or upper two-thirds of their class will be received as students. This protects the institutions against a considerable number of young men and women who lack intellectual ability or interest to pursue profitably the work they offer. The admission requirements, whatever they are, are usually administered by a director of admissions or a committee whose duties include the making of exceptions when a particular case seems to suggest that such should be done. A few leading colleges and universities, especially in the eastern part of the country, administer admission examinations, usually through what we call the College Entrance Examination Board, and admit students only from those who have passed successfully such examinations. In general, these institutions prescribe both qualitative and unit requirements not imposed by our state institutions and many of our other colleges and universities in the newer part of the country.

The instruction in the institutions of higher education in the United States is determined somewhat by the advancement or maturity of the students under instruction. In the first and second years which we call, respectively, the freshman and sophomore years, the instruction is almost wholly in classes by lectures, recitations, or more general discussion. Classes meet regularly according to a prearranged schedule. Assignments are made in some detail and the instructor devises means of checking with some regularity the progress of his students. In the third and fourth years, which are called, respectively, the junior and senior years, the instruction is still largely in classes, but the assignments are longer and more general, class attendance is not so strictly prescribed

or enforced, nor are there such frequent checks on the work of the students. Both the instructors and the students enjoy greater freedom in their work in these later years. Practically every course in the sciences includes laboratory work on the part of the student, and some of the more advanced courses are wholly laboratory courses. Likewise, some of the more advanced courses in other fields such as history, literature, and economics are almost wholly organized on a research or independent study basis. There is a general tendency in American higher education to give greater freedom to the students in the third and fourth years of their college or university work.

In the graduate schools, consisting of work in the fifth year and beyond, there is usually still greater freedom of teaching and study. The materials of instruction on this higher level are organized into courses, and regular meetings of classes are held, but the work of the students is carried on largely under the personal direction of the instructor in charge. The student spends most of his time in research or on some problem in which he individually may be interested. Aside from classroom meetings, he has individual conferences with his instructor. I shall not attempt to describe the methods of instruction or study in the several professional and technical schools of the universities. Each field of knowledge imposes its own requirements upon those who would enter therein.

As just indicated, by implication at least, the materials of instruction in the colleges and universities of the United States are organized into courses. A course may run for three months, or for four and one-half months, depending on whether the school year of nine months is divided into three units of three months each or two semesters of four and one-half months each. Frequently, elementary courses in a subject continue through the year. These courses carry specific credit which we designate by the term "hour." A course meeting three times a week in a college organized on a semester basis would carry three semester hours credit. A student would normally register for courses aggregating about fifteen or sixteen hours for each semester. This would mean that he would spend about that many clock hours under formal in-

struction in the classroom and, in addition, about twice that many hours in study or in laboratory work. On the basis of the organization of work just indicated, a student would earn about thirty hours of credit each year or, in four years, one hundred and twenty semester hours, the number usually required for graduation from a college or university. The degree conferred upon the completion of the work of four years is usually the bachelor of arts or bachelor of science degree. This is the first degree conferred by institutions of higher education and is received by the student at about the age of twenty-two, if his progress throughout his school work has been normal. All of the work of the four years leading to the baccalaureate degree is called undergraduate work.

Almost all of our universities, both state and independent, and many of our smaller colleges, offer one year of academic or semi-professional work beyond the four years of undergraduate work. This year's work leads to a second degree, the master of arts. The candidate for this degree must first hold the baccalaureate degree or its equivalent in academic training, must usually present a thesis showing some ability as an independent student, and pass an oral examination in the field of his chief interest.

A great many of our larger universities, both state and independent, offer further work for the doctor of philosophy degree. The work for this degree requires an additional year of formal study beyond the work required for the master of arts degree, and a dissertation, the preparation of which requires one or more years. The doctor of philosophy degree is rarely conferred before the age of twenty-five and usually at a later age. The degree is conferred not after a stated amount of work has been accomplished in a formal way, but only after the officers and faculty of a graduate school, and the several examiners are satisfied that the candidate is qualified to do independent work of a scholarly nature. Again, the work of the several professional and technical schools is so highly specialized that I have made no attempt to make statements relative to the organization of their materials of instruction or the requirements for degrees.

In the statement I have just made, I have had in mind the organization followed generally in our institutions of high-

er education. But it might be well to indicate a trend of discussion and a tendency in practice in regard to this organization. During the past fifteen or twenty years there has grown up in the United States a Junior College Movement. The junior college consists of the first two years of the four year college to which I have referred. Some of these junior colleges are extensions of the city high school and provide instruction similar to that offered in the first two years of a state or independent college or university. Others have resulted from a reorganization of the work of some of the smaller denominational colleges. The standards in higher education in America have been raised considerably during the past quarter of a century and a number of the smaller colleges, under denominational control, being unable to keep pace with the advancing requirements for a four year college, leading to a baccalaureate degree, have reorganized their resources and instructional services on a junior college basis. By doing so, they are able to provide an entirely satisfactory type of instruction for two years beyond high school graduation and then pass their students on to the junior year of the larger institutions. In our Pacific coast states of Washington, Oregon, and California this junior college development is recognized by the institutions of higher education through the organization of their four years' work into a lower division of two years and an upper division of two years.

This junior college development has raised a question with many of our students of educational policy and organization as to the future of the four year liberal arts college, leading to the baccalaureate degree at about the age of twenty-two. There are those who are strongly of the opinion that the period of general education should end at about the age of twenty, or at the conclusion of the second year of college work, and that the studies beyond that time should be of a technical or professional nature. The proponents of this policy point out that even now the third and fourth years of our four year undergraduate instruction is highly specialized through a system requiring the selection of a field of concentration at the beginning of the junior year in college. They argue that our organization should agree with the facts of the situation and that there should be a rather definite break

between the second and third years of the four year college course.

But, the four year liberal arts college has had a long and creditable existence in the United States, with its beginning in the founding of Harvard College in 1636. Also, arguments in its favor are based on the need of men and women with a somewhat extended general training in the literature, arts, sciences, history, and philosophy of the society of their day. It is pointed out that our increasingly complex social organization requires not only the technical expert in the sciences and professions, but a considerable group of people with social insight,—not the insight of the technically trained social engineer, but the insight of the citizen who can see beneath his special work, and the work of his neighbor, the social principles upon which our modern society is based. It is argued that the four year liberal arts college, devoted to that nebulous objective we call culture, might well make more articulate and definite its function by setting up the fundamental institutions of society themselves as objects of study,—not in a formal, analytical approach to the social organization and functions, but through a study of the agencies and forces that have produced our present complex civilization. That the junior college is with us cannot be denied, but I do not feel qualified to predict with any great confidence what the future development will be in regard to this two year institution.

Higher education in the United States has become quite popular during the past thirty years. Enrolments have increased until we have now approximately eight hundred thousand young men and women in our higher educational institutions. This is about the same number we had in all of our secondary schools at the close of the last century. I should like to say something about this large group of college and university students. The student body in an American city is about the same as a student body in any other part of the world. They are young men and women from eighteen to twenty-two or twenty-three years of age with all the characteristics and distinguishing features of human beings at that stage of development. Without attempting to describe them, it might not be out of order to indicate in a general way their interests, or-

ganizations, and activities, outside of their study and class work.

A very common type of student organization in the American college and university is what we call the fraternity. In general this term is used to refer to organizations of both men and women, but locally the men's organizations are called fraternities and the women's organizations sororities. These organizations are found in all of the state universities and in a great many, but not all, of the other institutions of higher education. In some institutions a very large percentage of the students, perhaps seventy-five or eighty, belong to these organizations, while in others the membership may be as low as twenty-five per cent of the total student body. Usually, though not always, these organizations, each with a membership of from twenty-five to perhaps seventy-five, have their own houses in which many of the members live, and which serve as a club house for all of the members. The management of the house, and other organization affairs, are in the hands of the students themselves with some regulations from the institution, and others from the alumni members of the fraternity, and still other rules imposed by the national fraternity of which the local organization is a chapter. These organizations provide very largely for the social and other extra-curricular interests and activities of their members. They impose and enforce certain standards of conduct. The men's organizations frequently organize athletics and other teams for intra-mural contests. They form a compact group with which administrative officers of the institution may make contacts in their services to the students.

Another type of fraternity is based on some common academic or professional interest. Thus, the students of the classics, Greek and Latin, and their instructors, the students of business and their instructors, or the students of the social sciences and their instructors, may form organizations, called fraternities, to advance their common interest in their respective fields of study. These organizations do not have houses, and their meetings are usually of a professional or academic nature.

The student body in most of the American colleges and universities is rather formally organized for the conduct of

their own student affairs. These organizations frequently take the name Associated Students. They hold regular elections, voting by ballot, to elect their officers. The officers elected constitute a kind of council or cabinet for the general administration of student affairs. In almost every institution there is a faculty representative on the council selected by the students. The student organization, through its administrative council, provides for the editing and management of the student newspaper and other student publications, for social and other activities in which the entire student body participates, and for conferences with the officers of the institution on problems of student affairs.

It is not certain whether athletics in American higher education should be considered as a student activity or as a part of the general educational and publicity program of the officials of the institution. The directors of physical education and the athletic coaches belong to the instructional staff of the institution. The business affairs of intercollegiate athletics are handled by an employed business manager. The games are played under definite and rather strict rules governing intercollegiate sports, and these rules are adopted by faculty representatives and athletic directors. The members of athletic teams are undergraduate students of the institution they represent. The number of men who actually participate in intercollegiate sports is very small, but the total number who engage in intramural sports is usually quite large.

The intercollegiate athletic contests in the United States, especially the major football contests, attract considerable attention and are attended by enormous crowds,—as many as sixty to eighty thousand people in some sections of the country. The students are interested in these contests because the game is really worth seeing, and also because a kind of glory attaches itself to the whole student body when a team wins or plays especially well. The institution is interested because the gate receipts from the games in the major sports help to finance minor sports, where there are no gate receipts, as well as the general program of physical education. The games are popular not only among the students, but to a very considerable extent, as attendance figures would indicate, among the citizens of the community in which the institution is located.

The major games, with their preliminaries of band music, and marching under college colors, and the attendant organized and spontaneous cheering, present a brilliant and fascinating spectacle.

With this large and somewhat heterogeneous group of late adolescent boys and girls in our colleges and universities, and with the requirements they impose on the faculty and administrative officers to serve their varied interests, one might wonder about the work of the faculty, especially as regards opportunity for research, and personal and independent study. The instructors in most of our smaller colleges and in the undergraduate classes of many of our larger universities are required to give about twelve or fifteen hours each week to classroom instruction. This instruction usually includes a few lectures and several periods of rather general discussion with the students in their classes. Many instructors have regular office hours for conferences with individual students in addition to their teaching schedule. This program of instruction does not allow much free time for research work. For the majority of men and women who teach our students in our undergraduate classes, research is incidental to the main business of teaching. This is not the case with the men who give instruction, and direct the study of the students, wholly or chiefly in the graduate schools. The nature of their work and the maturity of their students require that they shall be primarily research scholars rather than classroom teachers. Research, therefore, is to be found chiefly in the larger universities with graduate schools.

Both our state universities and our principal independent universities are well equipped materially for most kinds of investigations and research activities. Without having specific illustrations to support the statement, it seems that we are passing from the brick and mortar stage of our educational development to an emphasis upon the men who are to use our buildings and equipment. There is evidence of this in the generous salary schedules adopted and proposed in some of our leading universities. Almost without exception these salary schedules provide extra funds for the exceptional man when he is available.

Our research, especially in the sciences, has been given a practical emphasis. There is perhaps a partial explanation of this in the fact that we had many practical problems to solve in connection with the settlement of a new country. The Americans have been accused of talking and thinking in terms of enormous proportions. Perhaps we have had no alternative. The country is large and the resources are plentiful. Our problems have been largely of a quantitative nature. We have felt the necessity of doing something with our heritage, hence we have given much time to the practical problems of a new and rapidly expanding country. Our agricultural colleges have given their time largely to the practical aspects of agriculture and the sciences underlying agriculture. Our engineers have emphasized the practical aspects of the sciences upon which their work rests. But while the emphasis has been on the practical aspects of our problems there have always been men, and I think their number is increasing, who were interested in pure science and scholarship.

The universities have had a large part in the research activities of the United States. Commercial and social agencies, outside of the universities, have engaged in the study of their own special problems, but the university men have been called into the services of these agencies as counselors or directors of their investigations. I can best illustrate this type of university service to research from the field in which I am especially interested,—the school itself. During the past decade or two many of our states and several of our larger cities have undertaken the study of their curricula, their finances, or other problems in connection with their schools. These investigations have usually been made by men actually engaged in school work, but in almost every case specialists in the particular subject under investigation have been secured from our leading schools or colleges of education to direct the work of investigation and to counsel with the local men who were actually doing the work. Our social agencies have used the sociologists in our universities, and our men in political office have used the university men in political science to assist them in their respective inquiries. Thus, the university men, specialists in their several fields, are not only working directly in their own laboratories and libraries, but with their

knowledge of laws and principles, as experts in their respective fields of knowledge, they are retained by the man of affairs to direct and advise him in the solution of his practical problems.

But it is impossible to tell the whole story of American higher education, or any large part of it, in one hour. I have said nothing of the many sacrifices that have been made by men and women of limited means to provide a college for their boys and girls near home. Many men have given their time and energies to teaching at a very meagre salary. Every page of American college history records loyal devotion to some institution for advanced study. I can do no more than mention the fact of many large gifts in these recent years to advance the cause of research, or art, or higher education in general. Some of our states have made extremely generous grants of money to maintain and expand their state institutions.

These institutions represent a settled interest in advanced educational opportunities. Nine of our universities were founded during our colonial period. About twenty-five others are over one hundred years old with rather creditable records and traditions. Many of our splendid universities, including a considerable number of our state universities, are comparatively new,—they belong to the past fifty or sixty years. They have many marks of youth, but they are sincere in their efforts to serve well the students who study in them. And their efforts are not in vain. They are achieving, and will achieve increasingly as their foundations in history and traditions become more secure.

THE PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM IN THE UNITED STATES

It is a very great pleasure to bring to you informal but sincere greetings from The Colorado College of Colorado Springs in the United States. My visit to Great Britain and the continent is as a member of the teaching and administrative staff of The Colorado College and not as an officer or as a formally authorized representative of any public or voluntary educational association. In presenting to you a statement of the public school system in the United States, I should say that whatever authority I have to speak on the subject is the authority of a student of education in general and of our own system in America in particular.

In the preparation of this address, I have endeavored to answer questions which usually present themselves to students of educational theories and practices. Many of your questions will, of course, remain unanswered when I shall have finished, as I cannot hope to present to you a detailed statement of what we are doing in public education in the time at my disposal, but it shall be my endeavor to outline, in a general way, the philosophy, the organization, and the administration of our public schools.

The public schools in the United States are supported by public funds, raised by some form of taxation, and they are open, without costs in tuition or fees, to all of the children of all the people. These schools are also administered locally by the people through the selection, usually by popular vote, of representative citizens to serve on a board of education. This board of education is responsible to the people of the community for the conduct of their schools. There is, also, in the United States, the private or independent type of school which is supported by endowments, tuition, casual gifts, or some church organization. These schools carry on their work under a charter issued by the government of the state in which the schools exist. They must meet the minimum educational requirements imposed by the laws of the state, and are open

to inspection by public educational officials either by personal visits or through reports. But they enjoy considerable freedom in such matters as admission and graduation requirements, the curriculum, teaching methods, and other internal aspects of the school. Still another type of school which is relatively unimportant in our complete scheme of education, is the school which is conducted by individuals as a business and from which profits may be derived. These, too, are responsible to public educational officials, but their conduct is almost wholly a personal matter between the school managers and the parents who send their children to the school for instruction. My reference, in this address, is to the public school system, and not to those on private or independent educational foundations. I have mentioned them simply to make a little clearer the meaning of the term, public school, as it is used in the United States.

The public school system in the United States has wide reaches. It may, and frequently does, include the kindergarten; it extends through the elementary school, the secondary school which we call the high school, the state technical school and university, into the graduate and professional schools of state supported institutions. A child may enter the kindergarten at the age of four years, pass to the elementary school at the age of six, and then to the secondary school at about fourteen, on to the state technical school or state university at about eighteen, then into the state graduate or professional school, usually a part of the state university, at about twenty-two. He may receive all of this instruction at public expense in schools organized, supported and administered by the people through public school officials. A further indication of the extent of the public school system is found in the fact that more than ninety per cent of the children in the United States receive their elementary and secondary education in the public schools. The percentage is much lower in institutions of higher education. Although I have referred to state colleges and universities to indicate the extent of public education, I shall consider here, almost exclusively, the elementary and secondary school levels.

This extensive public provision for education has grown out of our educational philosophy. This philosophy, in prac-

tice, seeks to make available, at public costs, all of the educational opportunities a boy or girl is capable of using. This is done by providing schools, easy of access, to all the children of the people, and to the young men and women of every state. This philosophy, and its consequent generous school development, has invited into the schools, and especially into the higher reaches of the secondary schools and the universities, many young people who cannot profit greatly by the offerings of these educational agencies. Consequently, the offerings have been greatly diversified, and, from a traditional academic point of view, many questions have been raised as to the merit of some of the new subjects introduced.

However, there is no tendency to close the school doors to anyone who has even a moderate ability and a moderate willingness to apply himself. The philosophy seems to be growing that if a child or youth cannot do the work of the school as outlined, then the work should be adapted to his ability and his needs. In other words, the child must be served, and the public purse, through the public school, must be his servant.

But, it must be said immediately that increasing facilities are, also, at the disposal of the more capable throughout the public school system. While the school officials were making adaptations to accommodate the child of moderate or inferior ability, they never lost sight of their obligation to the more brilliant pupil. This has led to the classification of pupils, and to the organization of courses and subject matter adapted, somewhat roughly, to several levels of intelligence. We cannot provide for extensive individual instruction in a public school system, but, so far as possible, individual needs are discovered and served. The ambitious educational philosophy underlying the public school system in the United States is taking into account, increasingly, the potential leader and scholar. In our consideration of the masses, we have not lost sight of those boys and girls who give promise of becoming the salt of the earth through high personal and intellectual attainments.

This philosophy, which undertakes to make available an adequate educational opportunity for all of the children, is responsible for the attitude of the people, locally, toward their schools. The parents take a very personal interest in the edu-

cation of their children. In fact, the schools have grown up from the people; they represent a kind of folk development; they belong to the local community. The teacher usually becomes a member of the community, and enters informally into the community life. In the rural districts and in the smaller villages he lives in the homes of the people. The parents take a personal interest in the teacher and in the school. They use the school house as a kind of common community meeting place for clubs, public addresses, and other community interests. They visit the schools and talk to the teachers and principals about the education of their children. They supplement the public school funds by creating and administering funds for beautifying the school grounds, for buying extra school equipment such as radios, motion picture machines, pictures for the schoolroom walls, and books for the school library. The parents and teachers form joint organizations, usually called Parent-Teacher Associations, to discuss together their common problem of educating the children of the community.

The local interest in the schools to which I have just referred is far more than an informal expression. Formally and legally, the people of a city, village, or rural district are responsible for the conduct of their schools. Education, in the United States, is decentralized. Perhaps I can indicate this fact of decentralization, and the local responsibility for the schools, by referring to the authority of the different political units in America in the matter of education. First, I shall refer to the central or national government in Washington. No mention was made of education in the Constitution of the United States, adopted in 1787. We have very little federal or national educational legislation. We have a bureau of education in the federal department of the interior, but its chief duties are to collect, organize, and distribute educational information. The publications of the bureau of education, consisting of reports, statistics, studies, and circulars, are widely distributed and constitute our most valuable single body of educational literature. But this bureau has no educational authority except the authority of the facts it collects and distributes. A federal board for vocational education distributes funds to the states to supplement local efforts in certain types of vocational education, but the amount is not

large. The federal government supports and controls a few types of schools such as the military and naval academies at West Point and Annapolis, respectively, and certain Indian schools on Indian reservations. But the public school system in the United States is not under the authority of the government at Washington. Each one of the forty-eight states has its own system of education and its own educational laws. Educational legislation in the United States is state and not national legislation.

Within each of the forty-eight states the educational system is fairly well unified. The individual state passes laws which impose minimum requirements for the whole state in such matters as the length of the school year, the qualifications of teachers, ages of compulsory attendance, subjects of study, school buildings, and other similar interests. Almost every state has a state board of education, elected by the people or appointed by the governor or the state legislature, to adopt general policies for the conduct of the schools of the state. These policies must, of course, always be within the law. Further, each state has a chief educational officer, in most of the states elected by a popular vote of the people. This state school officer is called the superintendent of public instruction, commissioner of education, or other similar title. The duties of this officer are not uniform among the several states, but, in general, he serves as a kind of reference agent to the school people of the state. Also, this official, with his deputies and assistants, serves as a clerical agent in collecting and organizing educational reports, and in administering state school funds. In a more professional capacity, he confers with local school people on all sorts of questions pertaining to school organization and administration. The actual authority of the chief state school official varies greatly among the several states. In some states his services are almost wholly of a clerical nature, while in others his orders and regulations have about the same weight as school laws enacted by the state legislature.

In almost all of the states there are county school superintendents who serve somewhat as local deputies to the chief state school officer. These county superintendents perform general advisory services in their respective counties, espe-

cially in the rural and village schools. In some states these officers have considerable power and authority, while in others they are not much more than clerical agents for the schools of the county.

Within the counties are smaller units, usually called districts, for the immediate control of the local schools. These local districts are very much alike in their organization and control throughout the United States. The cities of New York and Chicago, each forming a single school unit, are organized in the same way as the school district in a far western state with its one room and one teacher school. The ultimate responsibility for the schools rests with the people who live in the districts they serve. The usual procedure in local school control is somewhat as follows: The qualified voters of a school district elect members of a school board. In rural communities this board is usually composed of three members; in cities the number is usually five, seven, or nine, but may be, and sometimes is, larger. These school board members are laymen in education, and frequently without school experience as teachers or school administrators. They represent the constructive citizenship of the community. Usually, they serve without pay. They look upon the school as one of the important social agencies of the community, and undertake so to direct it as to make it contribute its full share to the community well-being and progress. The chief duties of this board are to erect and maintain school buildings; secure expert educational leadership in superintendents, principals, supervisors, and teachers; determine general policies and rules for the conduct of the schools; and, in general, represent to the people, either directly or through their selected teachers and school officials, the educational interests of the community. These school board members rarely have formal connection, as school board members, with political parties or religious denominations. Individuals may be elected to board membership, in some cases, because of their commitment to a certain line of local educational development or because of their opposition to certain school tendencies, but school or educational parties are seldom strong and frequently do not exist at all. It should be made clear that while the responsibility for the schools of a district rests upon the people of that district, and while the

schools are governed by the school board they elect, no community can ignore the laws of the state in the conduct of its schools. But, within the law, which imposes minimum requirements only, the local board of education has the greatest possible freedom.

Just as the people of the school district organize and administer their schools, so they provide, in most of the states, for the larger part of their financial support. The practice is not uniform among the states in the matter of educational finance any more than it is in other aspects of education. The schools receive their support from two or three sources. One of the sources is a state school fund which is created by a general property tax, the income from state-owned school lands, or other more specific sources of revenue. This state school fund is distributed on some basis, as prescribed by law, to the several smaller school units within the state. The basis of distribution may be the school census, school attendance, number of teachers employed, or a combination of these or other factors. Almost every local school unit receives some money from its state school fund. The amount from this source varies from not more than three or four per cent of the total school costs in some parts of the country to more than fifty per cent in other parts.

Another source of school money in many states is the political division or unit we call the county. In most of our states the county is an important local unit of our political and other interests, and has, therefore, become one of the taxing units within the state. Among other taxes levied by the county in many states is a school tax and, thus, the county frequently constitutes a second source of income for the local school unit. But, in most of our states, the school district, the smallest school unit, is the chief support of its own schools. This means that the people of a local community must pay for the education of their children by taxing their own property for the support of their schools.

I might illustrate this distribution of the sources of our school income by presenting rather exactly the situation in my own state of Colorado. The state school fund in Colorado is derived from the sale and rental of school lands, which lands were designated by the national government as school lands

when Colorado was admitted to the union of states in 1876. This state school fund is distributed to the local school districts on a school census basis, and provides about seven or eight per cent of the total costs of the schools. Then, there is a county school fund, derived from a property tax, which is distributed to the local school districts, and which is used, in part, to equalize the financial burdens of the local districts. This county fund provides about seventeen or eighteen per cent of the total costs of the schools. The remainder, about seventy-five per cent of the total, is raised by a tax on the property within the local school district. I have presented the situation in Colorado in order to be rather specific in regard to one state, but I must hasten to say that perhaps no other state in all of the forty-eight has the same distribution of amounts from these three sources. The three sources are rather common, but the amounts from each of the sources vary greatly. Aside from a small amount for certain types of vocational education and the maintenance of a few special schools, the federal government does not provide financial support for the public schools.

The biggest single item in the school budget of the public schools is, of course, teachers' salaries. It would be quite in order to discuss the destiny as well as the source of the school money, but it would perhaps be of greater interest to you to speak of the teachers for whom most of the school money is raised, and of their preparation and qualifications for teaching.

About eighty per cent of the classroom instruction in the public schools of the United States is given by women. They also hold many responsible positions as principals, supervisors, and occasionally, as superintendents of city or village school systems. One rarely finds a man teacher in the elementary grades, and the women share very largely with the men in secondary school instruction.

This large percentage of women teachers is a partial explanation of the statement we sometimes hear that in the United States we have a teaching procession instead of a teaching profession. In the home, as wife and mother, is the normal destiny of woman, and many of our young women teachers fully expect to withdraw from the schoolroom as

soon as an acceptable opportunity to marry is offered. A further aspect of this problem of the stability of our teaching body is found in the number of young men who teach for a few years and then take up some other kind of work or resume their studies to prepare for law, medicine, engineering, business, or some other profession requiring specialized training. These short terms of teaching service are due, in part, to the rather limited training required in some states to secure a certificate to teach. In fact, in some states it is still possible to secure a certificate to teach by passing what we call a teachers' examination and without having any formal pedagogical instruction or training. If the cost of securing a position is little, the position will hardly be regarded as one of great importance. This condition, however, is rapidly changing, and has actually passed in many of the states. Today there is a rather general tendency to issue certificates to teach only to those men and women who have pursued successfully certain prescribed and elective courses of a technical or professional character in some educational institution approved by the state educational officials for the training of teachers.

This training of the teachers for the public schools in the United States is given in different types of institutions. Every state has its own teacher training institutions supported by public funds and administered, rather exclusively, for the training of teachers. Also, in almost every state is a state university, supported by public funds, with a department or college of education. The distinction between the two, roughly speaking, is that the teachers' colleges train the teachers for the elementary schools and the universities train high school teachers, school principals, supervisors, superintendents, and other school officers. In fact, however, many students go from the teacher training colleges into high school teaching and administrative positions and from the universities into elementary school work.

In addition to the public provision for teacher training in the state supported teachers' colleges and state universities, there are in almost every state privately endowed educational institutions which include in their educational services the training of teachers. These institutions vary from the rather unimportant denominational college of liberal arts, which

maintains a small department of education, to the large heavily endowed university, like Chicago or Harvard, with its highly organized college of education. This does not mean that there is no uniform practice in the training of teachers within a given state. The educational laws of a state indicate what the minimum training shall be, and any institution, private or public, that undertakes to train teachers for the public schools must assure the state educational officials that it is able and willing to meet those requirements.

The training of prospective teachers consists, roughly, of three parts, all in addition to the general academic training in connection with, or preceding, the special pedagogical instruction. These three fields of special training are: First, the school as an institution, its history, philosophy, and present organization and administration. Second, the child in his physical and mental development. This branch of special preparation includes general and educational psychology with special reference to the learning process. And, third, methods and materials of instruction. Some of the methods courses are highly specialized, such as a course in the teaching of silent reading to the children of the primary grades, while others are more general and appear under the course title—Principles of Teaching. Consideration is given in all methods courses to the subjects of instruction and the methods or principles most suitable for the different subjects. Practice teaching, a kind of apprenticeship, is rather generally required among the states in connection with methods courses. There is a rather general requirement, written into the educational laws in many states, that the teacher in the high school must hold the bachelor of arts degree or its equivalent. The elementary school teacher may meet the requirements for his certificate, in most states, by pursuing general and professional courses two years beyond high school graduation. I am making no attempt here to enumerate the courses offered in any one teacher training institution, or prescribed as minimum requirements by any state, but rather to indicate general fields of instruction and general qualifications in the training of teachers for the public schools.

Back of the specific training of teachers for the classroom, there is a rather extensive and thorough study of the

whole problem of education. This study, and the schools making provision for it, may be called professional. The professional degree, Doctor of Education, is given by a few institutions, including Harvard University on the east coast and the University of California on the west coast. Almost every state university has recently created, or developed from a department, a school or college of education. These schools have their own administrative machinery, their own faculties, and, in some cases, their own buildings. This movement has given a greater dignity and prestige to the subject of education and to teaching. As a result, more men and women are entering the field of education as a life work, and the rewards in salary, in social recognition, in personal satisfactions, and in results are increasing.

In connection with this phase of the public school system in the United States, it may seem somewhat strange that the ultimate leadership in American education comes not so much from public as from independent and privately endowed institutions. The state universities are increasing in importance as centers of educational leadership, and their work at present is extensive and of great value, but other institutions like Teachers College of Columbia University, the College of Education at Chicago University, the Graduate School of Education at Harvard University, and the School of Education at Stanford University, all privately endowed institutions, and not dependent at all on public money for support, really provide the ultimate leadership in the training of teachers and school administrators for the public school system in the United States.

No statement about the public school system in America would be complete if it did not include a reference to voluntary associations of teachers and school officers. These educational associations constitute an important factor in our organization and administration of the public schools. Almost every state has its own educational association with its annual meeting of teachers, and its state educational journal. These state associations frequently inaugurate and prosecute studies in educational problems with reference to their own needs. Much of our educational legislation has its source in these voluntary state organizations of teachers. Then, there

are regional associations which study the needs of a particular section of the country and which secure a greater degree of uniformity in educational practices among the several states of their respective sections. And, finally, there are national associations, represented best, perhaps, by the National Education Association which holds its annual mass meeting of teachers in July, and another meeting for school superintendents and other school officers in the winter. The National Education Association carries on research in education through committees and officers, and publishes, not only the results of its investigations, but also complete reports of its annual meetings, and a monthly journal for general discussion of educational problems. These associations and their publications are largely responsible for the professional encouragement and stimulation of the teachers and school administrators, and they help to maintain a kind of professional attitude toward the work of the schools. But perhaps the greatest service of all, especially of the national voluntary associations, is the sense of unity which they give to the schools of the whole nation. The many fairly uniform practices we follow in the different parts of the country have resulted largely from these national meetings of teachers and school officers, and the publication of the discussions of their common problems.

Certain educational problems have been suggested in my effort to present a picture of the public school system in the United States. We know very well that our system is not perfect. We have many educational problems. Our general educational philosophy is fairly well accepted but, within that philosophy, every phase of our educational endeavor presents its constant or recurring problems. I have already referred, at least by implication, to the problem of the training of teachers, and the stability of the teaching body. We have the problem of articulation as it applies to the different levels of our educational ladder and, also, to the different subjects of instruction. But there are two problems that seem to be a bit more pressing just now than any of the others. They are the problem of the curriculum and the problem of finance. I shall present these briefly.

Three or four years ago the president of the National

Education Association was asked to name the most pressing educational problem in America. "To know what and how to teach," was his reply. Many of our chief cities have been engaged recently, or are now engaged, in a revision of their curriculum. Colleges and universities are similarly engaged. This is not a fad, a thing which is just being done by school teachers and officials and college professors, but a sincere desire to evaluate the subjects we teach in order to limit those that seem less important in the educational process and to emphasize those that seem better to meet the needs of the children and young people under our instruction. Without attempting to give in detail the technique of these curriculum studies or the results reached thus far, it might be well to say that there is a tendency to shift the emphasis, outside of the generally accepted constants in a school curriculum, from the practical and vocational subjects to physical and social education.

During the late war we were made aware of the physical disabilities of many of our young men due largely to inadequate knowledge of proper physical habits and functions. Since that time the schools have been enlisted in a rather general service to better physical manhood and womanhood. Also, in these more recent years, emphasis is being placed on the social implications of the work in which men and women engage. There is a general feeling that it is not enough to be able to do some kind of work well, but that, in addition, the workman should have some adequate appreciation of his place, and the place of his work, in a complete social organization. The curriculum, always a means to an end, has been weighed and measured to determine in just what respects it succeeds and wherein it fails to meet the requirements of these modified educational objectives. Changes have actually not been extensive or radical, but changing emphases have been clearly noted in almost every part of the country. The problem of the curriculum is, of course, as old as the Periclean Age of Greece, and will probably remain a problem to the end of time, but just now, in America, it seems to be one of the more pressing problems.

The problem of educational finance in the several states of America is not, primarily, one of quantity, but of distribu-

tion. Of course, every school man would say that he could use, most advantageously, more school money, but since the schools belong to the people we may assume that they are fairly well satisfied with the amount of their educational investment. The problem of distribution has two aspects: First, the sources of the school money, and, second, the distribution of the school funds to the several school units within a state. At present our school money comes very largely from a tax on property without very much regard to the value of the property from the point of view of the income it produces. There is a rather general feeling among school men who have studied educational finance that sources less tangible than property, such as incomes, profits, and inheritances, should be tapped more generally to support education. A number of states, including my own state of Colorado, is engaged at present in a study of its system of securing revenue for the schools with a view to a more equitable distribution of the burden of support. The second part of the problem of educational finance refers to the more equitable distribution of the educational funds among the different school units or districts within the several states. An earlier reference was made to the fact that in some states seventy-five per cent or more of the total cost of the schools was paid by the city, village, or rural district in which the schools were located. This means, in actual practice, that those school units with considerable taxable property can raise a large school fund on a low tax rate, while the school units with little taxable property, like the smaller villages and rural districts, must levy a high tax on the property they have and still secure a relatively small school fund. One of our problems is to create some machinery of distribution by which the centers of wealth, either in taxable property, or profits and incomes, may bear a larger share of the educational burdens of the less favored communities.

In concluding this statement concerning the system of public education in the United States, it might be well to point out that it has grown up, like other institutions, with the country, and that one of the principles underlying our social organization is that of local initiative and local responsibility. Professional leadership in education is becoming more influential, but there is no evidence that the people, in some form

and rather directly, will cease to have a large part in providing education for their children. The schools will continue to be public schools in that they will continue to belong to the people who will, in some way, organize them, administer them, and support them.

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